



EAST HELENA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School District No. 9

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"Success For All"

September 10, 2013

To the FCC and Others Whom It May Concern:

The East Helena School District is steadfastly committed to keeping our schools ahead of the curve when it comes to the latest technological innovations. We believe technology is an integral part of the educational process and we strive to keep both staff and students positively engaged. The technology landscape continues to challenge the resources of the school district as we attempt to reshape education to allow students learning opportunities commensurate with current and future job needs.

Our school district applauds the Federal Communications Commission's approval of the E-Rate Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM), an initiative to modernize the E-Rate program. As leaders in education we believe that the FCC E-Rate funding, provided through telecommunication companies and helping school districts afford their communications connectivity, including the Internet, is critical.

The FCC's approval reflects the comments by the public focusing on the need to modernize the program—which is vital in supporting school connectivity. The move complements the President's ConnectED proposal to provide high-speed broadband Internet access to 99 percent of the nation's students within five years.

E-Rate is responsible for the rapid expansion of connectivity to the nation's schools. However, high-speed access in classrooms remains inadequate in many districts across the country. The direction should shift from establishing connectivity to expanding connectivity, especially for the benefit of students from low-income families. As we work to ensure that our students meet the challenges they face, we ask that the FCC recognize the overwhelming support of our citizens for this initiative.

This expansion will only happen with increased investment in the E-Rate program, whose funding has remained virtually unchanged since the program was created. Please consider increased funding and support for the expansion of the E-Rate program.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Walter

East Helena Board of Trustees
Scott Walter, Board Chair